Tuesday, March 10, 2015

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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Our bear over there

Humphrey has barely landed in Winnipeg, but the ex-Torontonian is settling nicely into his new digs at Assiniboine Park Zoo. Story, page 8.

CONTRIBUTED

York faculty agree to deal

Labour. But TAs and grad students to head back to the picket line after rejecting offer

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
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Contract faculty are no longer striking at York University, but graduate students who work as research assistants and teaching assistants will be hitting the pickets lines again Tuesday.

At a ratification vote on Monday evening, two out of three bargaining units rejected the settlement offer negotiated by the union. Whether or not classes will restart was not known at press time.

The vote came after the union and administration returned to the bargaining table Friday and reached an agreement the same day. The 3,700 TAs, graduate assistants and contract teachers had been on strike four days.

Before Monday's vote, the union had decided — but not unanimously — to recommend members to accept the offer.

Refusing the new deal would to "protracted, weeks-long stalemate," the union warned.

"If this offer is rejected, the deals will likely get worse before they get better — and there is no guarantee that they will get better at all."

For more coverage, see page 10.

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NEWS 1

Weather

Bitter winter hard on pedestrians, easy on roads: City

If you've noticed your daily commute is a little less bumpy this year, you have Mother Nature to thank.

While hard on pedestrians, this year's bitter winter was a blessing for the city's streets, said road operations manager Hector Moreno.

"Last year, we had more freeze-thaw cycles, and that put more stress on the pavement," he said.

This year, the mercury hardly crept above zero in January and February, meaning Toronto's roads simply stayed frozen.

The result has been fewer potholes. So far this year, the city has filled in 31,000 potholes, compared to 66,000 by this time in 2014, Moreno said.

However, the worst may be yet to come. Moreno believes the extended road freeze could lead to more sinkholes in the spring.

Anyone who spots a pothole is encouraged to call 311, Moreno said.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Quoted

"Last year, we had more freeze-thaw cycles, and that put more stress on the pavement."

Road operations manager Hector Moreno

This bicycle on Bremmer Boulevard is one of many that have become exposed since the thaw started. Last year, the city removed 347 abandoned bikes during its spring cleaning blitz. LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Critters and clutter lurk in snowbanks

Weather.
City workers to begin removing some of the trash this week

LUKE SIMCOE
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Buried in the snowbanks lining Toronto's streets are thousands of tonnes of garbage just waiting to be revealed by above-zero temperatures.

Last year, the city picked up 6,300 tonnes of trash during its annual spring cleaning blitz. This year, road operations manager Hector Moreno believes there will be even more.

"The more snow you have over the course of the winter, the more debris there is on the boulevard," he said.

City workers will begin removing some of the cruft this week in preparation for Clean Toronto Together, a four-week blitz starting March 30.

Moreno said anyone interested in volunteering for community cleanup days can register through the city's 311 service.

While much of the garbage hidden in the snow consists of coffee cups, cigarette butts and plastic bags, Moreno said it's not unusual to find discarded appliances or even dead animals.

"There's cats, dogs, raccoons and squirrels frozen in there," he said.

The cleaning push also helps prevent accumulated road debris — "the ugly grit that sits on the curb" — from clogging the city's gutters and storm drains, Moreno said.

At a glance

During last year's Clean Toronto Together event, city staff and volunteers cleared tonnes of garbage from the streets. That included:

- 830 car tires
- 497 dead trees
- 725 abandoned appliances
- 60 shopping carts
- 347 abandoned bicycles

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Search. Police union officials step aside during investigation

Three senior Ontario Provincial Police union officials — one a former Liberal candidate — have stepped aside in the wake of an RCMP criminal probe.

The dramatic move Monday followed a raid Friday by the Mounties, who swooped in to the OPP Association headquarters in Barrie armed with a search warrant.

Sources close to the association told Torstar News Service that RCMP investigators are examining financial matters at the police union.

RCMP Const. Jean Juneau said the search warrant has been ordered sealed by an Ontario Superior Court judge.

That means details of evidence sought by the Mounties cannot yet be made public.

But Juneau emphasized "no charges are imminent" in an investigation that began only recently.

He would not comment further on the warrant, saying officers were searching for "evidence that could help in our investigation."

"We'll see later on if charges are deemed necessary."

Association president Jim Christie, vice-president Martin Bain, and chief administrative officer Karl Walsh "have taken voluntary leaves of absence," the union said in a statement.

Walsh, who was the provincial Liberal candidate in Barrie during the 2011 election, has been placed on administrative leave by the OPPA's board of directors.

"The RCMP is conducting a criminal investigation and believed that evidence to support its investigation could be found in the OPP Association Head Office, as well as the offices of president Christie, vice-president Bain and CAO Walsh," the OPPA said.

On his LinkedIn profile, Walsh also identifies himself as a director of the Ontario Pension Board, which administers the $18-billion Public Service Pension Plan sponsored by the Ontario government.

He also served as president of the OPPA from October 2005 to March 2011, when he became the association's chief administrative officer, responsible for its then $70-million budget.

Christie made headlines in last June's provincial election when he had the union actively campaign against then Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak.

"For the first time in the 60-year history of the OPPA, Tim Hudak has given us no choice but to engage in a publicity campaign during an election," Christie said at the time.

The union released two videos attacking the Tories for wanting to cancel OPP contracts, reduce pay, and cut pension plans for new recruits. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

U of T research tackles global warming questions

Environment. Researchers trace the source of methane, a greenhouse gas

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
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University of Toronto researcher Barbara Sherwood Lollar said discovering the source of methane gas will help scientists better understand and predict forces behind global warming. CONTRIBUTED

The world is getting warmer — but scientists are still figuring out exactly how.

New research aided by a Toronto geochemist is set to help answer that question by focusing on the lesser known and more potent greenhouse gas: methane.

University of Toronto methane specialist Barbara Sherwood Lollar teamed up with researchers at MIT and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to develop technology that pinpoints the origin of methane gas.

Carbon dioxide is a more plentiful greenhouse gas, but methane is far better at trapping heat, making it an important contributor to the causes of climate change.

In fact, recent research has suggested that methane emissions will increase at a faster pace than CO2 in coming years, making it an even more important greenhouse gas to understand.

Methane comes from two sources: Microbes, like those found in swamps, wetlands and livestock, and from geologic roots, like coal deposits. Microbial sources emit methane at lower temperatures than geological sources.

Methane retains a fingerprint of that temperature, and using new technology developed at MIT, Lollar and her colleagues were able to take samples of methane and trace them back to where they originated, by measuring a rare methane carbon molecule.

"Our technique gets us a step closer to understanding where methane is coming from, so that's an important contribution to the kinds of studies going on around the climate impacts of greenhouse gases like methane," Sherwood Lollar said.

With the impacts better understood, scientists can figure out better solutions, she added.

Quoted

"Our technique gets us a step closer to understanding where methane is coming from."

Barbara Sherwood Lollar, University of Toronto methane specialist

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Student group lobbying for tuition reductions

Education. Advocates want to see provincial fee levels return to what they were in 2005

GILBERT NGABO
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Yeliz Beyo, vice-president social of the International Students' Association at the University of Toronto, is among those affected by an upcoming tuition hike. GILBERT NGABO/METRO

The Ontario government should slash tuition fees to facilitate access to better education, a student advocate group says.

Members of the Ontario Federation of Students are at Queen's Park this week lobbying MPPs to bring tuition levels to what they were in 2005, which is 30 to 35 per cent less than the current levels. The decrease should happen over a period of three years, the group says.

The lobbying comes as students across the province face a tuition increase of three to five per cent next school year.

For the past six years, students in Ontario have paid the highest tuition fees in the country. Students in professional and graduate programs and international students take a bigger punch from hikes, said Anna Goldfinch, the federation's national executive representative.

"It's a big concern for us," she said. "By next academic year, the Liberal government will have increased tuition fees an average of 108 per cent since 2003."

The provincial four-year framework introduced in 2013 caps tuition increases for domestic students at five per cent. But universities are at liberty to regulate international students' fees and often charge four to five times more than for domestic students, she said.

"International students have faced increases of as much as 50 per cent in the last nine years," she said, adding that it's a result of inadequate government funding.

The University of Toronto's business board voted last week to increase tuition by five per cent next year for existing international students. New international students will pay more, with the amount varying depending on what they study.

Tuition will increase nine per cent for incoming arts and science students, while new applied science and engineering students will see an increase of 10 per cent, said Benjamin Coleman, one of two student representatives on the board.

Coleman and the other student on the board were the only ones who opposed the move.

Second-year political science student Yeliz Beyo is none too pleased about the increase.

An international student from Turkey, she already pays upward of $30,000 a year.

"It's not as if we are getting any special treatment to be paying five times more than others," she said. "Things remain the same despite the amount of money we pay."

By the numbers

- **$4,933:** Average undergraduate tuition in 2005 in Ontario.
- **$7,539:** Average tuition now for undergraduates in Ontario (up from $7,257 last year).
- **$5,581:** Average tuition fees for undergraduates in Canada.
- **$27,000:** Average student debt upon completion of an undergraduate program in Ontario.
- **16.3%:** Tuition reduction proposed for the first year by the Ontario Federation of Students.
- **8.3%:** Tuition reduction each year for the following three years, as proposed by the federation.

SOURCES: STATISTICS CANADA, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Budget. Years of overruns ahead for transit costs

Tasked with filling a gaping $86-million hole, Toronto city council is now steps away from committing to borrow money from itself so as to pass a balanced budget.

If approved as written this week — there are few clashes expected in the first budget of the new term — property taxes will rise 2.75 per cent, while the city reinvests in some services that were cut over the past four years, including the TTC.

The decision to find the needed cash internally and reduce the amount put toward the capital budget will place additional financial hardships on council beyond 2020, forcing the city to find more savings each year — a move some are calling unrealistic and unsustainable.

As councillors take their seats at a special meeting, starting Tuesday, to approve the budget, they do so knowing their biggest challenge of building out the city's transportation infrastructure will cost them at least $500 million in overruns — more than the entire operating budget for children's services or paramedic services or the total amount needed to run Toronto Water or solid-waste services.

Those pending costs, from which senior governments have stepped back, add to growing concerns about the city's financial viability.

"With respect to going forward, there absolutely are challenges, and the mayor's conscious of that," said Mayor John Tory's spokeswoman, Amanda Galbraith.

It takes just four numbers to see why some councillors are looking ahead warily: Though the city needed to find $25 million this year to break even, next year, that number will be $69.3 million. In 2017, it grows to $114.5 million. In 2018: $160.6 million.

Each increase is the equivalent of a 1.7 per cent hike in taxes, on top of any inflationary increases and the Scarborough subway levy.

Galbraith said the mayor's push to find further efficiencies in coming years will be a "businesslike approach of going line-by-line through departments and items and sections of the city."

Council will meet Tuesday and Wednesday to debate and approve the budget.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Advocacy. Transit riders group seeks seat on TTC board

Transit advocates in Toronto want a seat on the bus, and at the table.

TTCriders, a group that lobbies on behalf of TTC customers for more service and lower fares, is seeking a spot on the TTC board.

"We want to make sure there's one voice that represents transit riders," said TTCriders director Jessica Bell. "There's 1.8 million of us, so our voice should be heard."

Bell submitted her application last week. If selected, she'll get one of the four seats on the board reserved for the public.

The other seven seats are filled by city councillors, many of whom admit to not taking the TTC on a regular basis.

"Jessica has years of experience leading non-profit organizations and being a champion for social change and riders' interests," said TTCriders chair Marco Covi. "Most importantly, she rides the TTC every day."

However, experience as a straphanger isn't necessarily what the board is looking for. A list of qualifications available on the city's website foregrounds things like business and finance knowledge instead. That's something Bell would like to see changed.

"We don't need Bay Street people running our public services," she said. "We need a mix of people who represent the community across Toronto."

The new board members will be chosen in April and sworn in at council May 5.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Fatality

Toddler dies on way to hospital

A 14-month-old boy died on the way to hospital after he was reported not breathing at a Burlington daycare, according to Halton Regional Police.

On Monday, around 12:15 p.m., police and paramedics responded to a call at the Wee Care Educational Services daycare centre.

The boy was pronounced dead around 2 p.m. after being rushed to Joseph Brant Hospital.

No foul play is suspected. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Crime

Social worker facing charges

A Newmarket social worker has been charged with sexual assault after a teenage girl came forward, police say.

York Regional Police said they began investigating on Sunday after a parent informed them his daughter was involved in a sexual relationship with a case worker.

James Malcolm is charged with five counts each of sexual assault, sexual interference and invitation to sexual touching. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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City's homeless face uphill battle

Fair Change. Initiative aims to reduce police fines for Torontonians without homes

During 10 "lost years" on the street, Mike Viera racked up more than $7,000 in tickets for trespassing, loitering, sleeping in a park and even riding a bicycle without a helmet.

"I was using every day — crack and alcohol," says the 37-year-old Toronto man. "I was well known to police. They knew I couldn't pay. One officer gave me a ticket and told me to use it as toilet paper."

Viera says he wasn't happy using drugs. And when he landed in jail for smoking crack in a parking garage almost five years ago, he welcomed the chance to participate in a court-ordered drug treatment program.

Today he is clean, living in his own apartment and looking into a course to upgrade his English skills in the hope of getting a job in the trades.

But Viera's outstanding tickets — and the harassing phone calls from collection agencies — continue to haunt him.

"If I don't get rid of those tickets, I won't be able to get rid of my past," he says.

Viera is one of several hundred homeless and so-called "street-involved" people with thousands of dollars in outstanding fines who have turned to a free legal clinic operating out of downtown community drop-ins for the last six years.

Fair Change Community Legal Services — a word-play on the "spare change" from strangers many clients rely on — was created by former Osgoode Hall law student Joanna Nefs.

"I could always find people to deal with landlord and tenant, immigration and criminal issues, but nobody was handling tickets," said Nefs, now a practising lawyer.

The clinic's biggest win was to cut one man's fines from $45,000 to $1,000, she said.

In addition to going to court with people like Viera to appeal their fines, the students are also on the front lines of a provincial campaign to end the "criminalization of homelessness" by abolishing the Safe Streets Act. The act, introduced in 1999 by the Mike Harris government, purportedly to deal with squeegee kids, prohibits panhandling "in an aggressive manner."

"We have people who are in extreme poverty, who are often suffering from addictions and mental health problems, and (we're) issuing tickets they have no hope of paying," said York University professor Stephen Gaetz, director of the homelessness observatory.

Opponents argue the act had no impact on the "squeegee kid problem," which they say was a passing phenomenon that no longer exists.

"The act is an ineffective, expensive, inhumane response to homelessness," says third-year Osgoode Hall student Jaime Mor, 24, who has run the Fair Change clinic with fellow student Cassandra Stefanucci, 26, for the past two years.

In addition to repealing the Safe Streets Act, which carries jail time of up to six months for repeat offenders, Mor believes ticketing the homeless for other offences, such as Viera's, should also be stopped.

"We need police to change the way they deal with homeless people. Period," he says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Safe Streets Act

Between 2000 and 2010, 15,224 tickets worth over $4 million were issued, costing police $1 million and 16,847 man hours to enforce the Act.

- **Paying up.** About 99 per cent of tickets issued by police are never paid.
- **Soliciting.** Eighty per cent of issued tickets were for non-aggressive solicitations.

SOURCE: CANADIAN OBSERVATORY ON HOMELESSNESS, YORK UNIVERSITY

Uber. Service must keep insurance secret: Lawyer

Lawyers for Uber Canada Inc. say the ride-hailing app has plenty of insurance coverage for its drivers but it needs to keep the details secret for competitive business reasons.

In fact, the insurance policy, which covers up to $5 million US for drivers, is so secret that very few people have seen it, even within Uber, according to a court affidavit.

The company will ask a judge in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on Tuesday to seal all details about the insurance policy, arguing the company's "competitive advantage" would be lost with disclosure.

If the information became public, then companies marketing competitor apps could simply copy the terms, Uber says.

Henry Gustav Fulder, director of insurance for parent company Uber Technologies Inc. in San Francisco, states in an affidavit that the company's insurance policy is not a standard automobile liability product.

Uber's wholly owned subsidiary Rasier holds contracts with Uber's drivers. Raisier said it spent seven months working with its insurance broker and multiple insurers in Canada and other countries to develop a policy to meet their needs.

"Procuring this coverage for Canada was accomplished after similar products were developed for Rasier or affiliated companies for us in Europe and the United States, but before P2P (peer-to-peer) services could be requested through the Uber App in Canada," Fulder states in the affidavit.

He added there were special terms with respect to the scope of coverage provided. "I am not aware of any insurance policy that provided such coverage (or even similar coverage) for this use in Canada, prior to the development of the insurance policy," Fulder said.

He noted that the insurance policy has been kept strictly confidential since it was developed. "Even within the companies, the policy is shared only (on) a tightly restricted, need-to-know basis," Fulder said.

"Moreover, to my knowledge, with the exception of the companies' legal counsel, the broker that produced the policy and the third-party claims administrator that administers insurance claims for the policy, the policy has never been shared with any third party," he said.

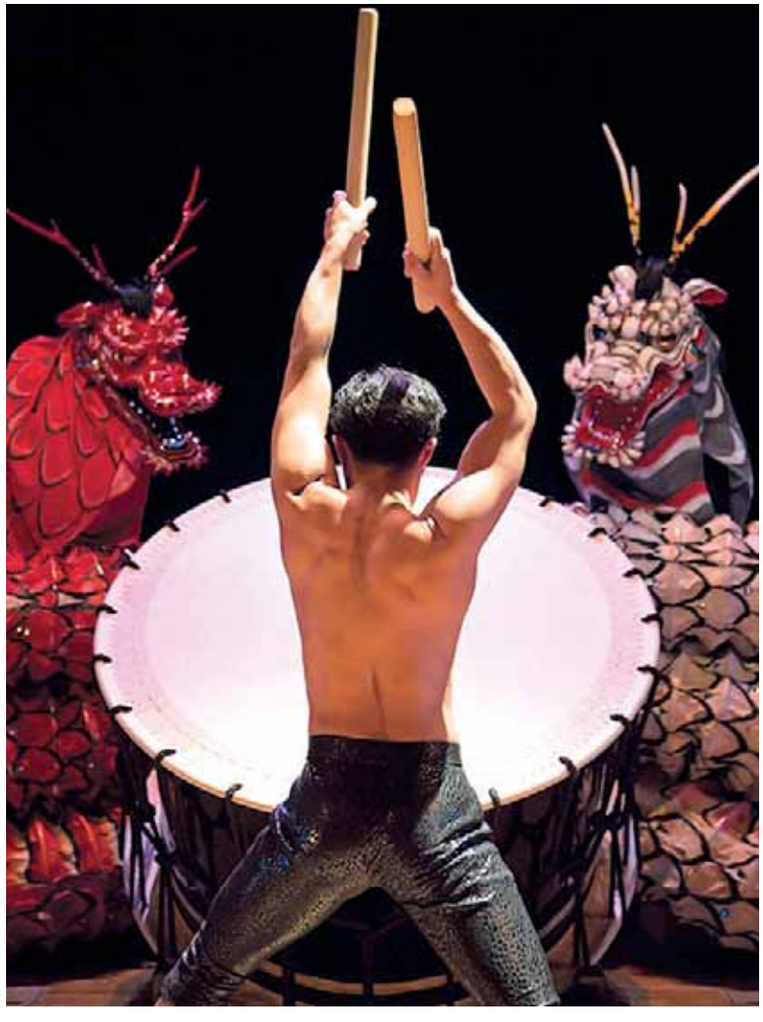
Uber spokeswoman Susie Heath declined to comment on the motion, citing company policy not to discuss matters before the courts.

The motion seeking a court order to seal the information is related to the City of Toronto's application for a court injunction to block Uber's operations here. That hearing is scheduled to be heard in May.

Uber argues it is not a taxi service, so it doesn't need to be licensed.

In November, the City of Mississauga also began legal proceedings for an injunction against Uber but suspended its application pending the outcome of Toronto's case.

Last month, a justice of the peace put 36 Toronto bylaw infractions charges against Uber, from 2012 to 2014, on hold until completion of the injunction hearing. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Drumming troupe thunders into Toronto

Give up that quiet life, because the Kodo Drummers are heading for Toronto. The troupe members, who lead a quiet, monastic life in Japan, are going to make some noise at the Sony Centre on Thursday. Expect dragons, masks and enormous props to create an eye-popping spectacle. Kodo One Earth Tour: Mystery is at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts on Thursday at 8 p.m. Tickets at 1-855-872-7669 or ticketmaster.ca. CONTRIBUTED

Humphrey. Polar bear cub comfy in new home

One of the Toronto Zoo's most well-known polar bears has finished his trek west and is getting comfy in Winnipeg.

Known as Humphrey, the 16-month-old cub arrived in his new digs at Assiniboine Park Zoo about 2 a.m. Saturday. He'll spend a month in quarantine but is on display.

"All signs indicate that he is in good spirits and it will be a smooth transition as he is slowly introduced to the other polar bears," Brian Joseph, director of zoological operations at Assiniboine, said in a statement.

Humphrey's brother, Hudson, was already in Winnipeg and was the first polar bear to call the zoo's International Polar Bear Conservation Centre home. METRO IN WINNIPEG

Transit safety

Pair injured in TTC bus crash

Two passengers were knocked to the ground by a crash involving a TTC bus and a car in Scarborough on Monday afternoon.

The passengers suffered minor injuries during the collision near Warden and Steeles avenues at around 3:30 p.m. and were transported to hospital, according to Toronto paramedics. Neither driver was hurt.

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What students really think about the York, UofT strikes

Education. Social media helps tell the tales away from the picket lines — and it looks like not everyone's eager for classes to resume

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
jessica.smithcross@metronews.ca

Strikers gather at the University of Toronto campus on Monday. JESSICA SMITH CROSS/METRO

One York student writes on Yik Yak: "If they settle this week, I'm actually (screwed)."

Another posts on Whisper, with a picture of a stack of green pancakes: "Please gimme another week of strike so I can (go) out on st paddys day with my crush."

Popular anonymous messaging apps like Whisper, Secret and YikYak have stirred controversy for being the tools of anonymous harassment and abuse on university campuses. But, during the strikes at Canada's two largest universities, they've turned into spots to share some brutally honest views.

For the most part, they're not the views you hear in news reports from the picket lines.

At York, where classes have been cancelled since last week, many students seemed to appreciate the break.

"I am so scared that the T.A s might agree to the settlement," one person posted on Whisper, noting they have a lot of work to get done.

Another wrote on Yik Yak (complete with an emoji of a happy person with hands thrust in the air): "This strike may last a little longer."

University of Toronto Confessions Facebook page, which publishes comments from the school community submitted anonymously through a third-party website, has a series of debates about the merits of the strike.

They're spurred by posts like this one: "Someone please enlighten me. How does blocking parking lots and roads with picket lines, p****ing off students and faculty members, help you?"

Mississauga

Church asks North Korea to release its pastor

A Mississauga church wants North Korea to release its pastor, who is being detained in the communist country while there on a humanitarian mission.

The Light Korean Presbyterian Church says it also wants the United Nations to step in to help the Canadian government work on the release of Rev. Hyeon Soo Lim.

Lim, 60, has travelled to North Korea more than 100 times on humanitarian missions, says family and church spokeswoman Lisa Pak, with much of his work concentrated in the north-eastern region of Rason. The family hasn't heard from Lim since he went to North Korea on Jan. 31.

Pak has said Lim is facing charges, but could not say what they are.

The church says Lim has demonstrated nothing but "Christ-like compassion" for the people of North Korea. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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U.S.-led team to join probe of soldier's death

Iraq. Defence minister says there are two investigations of the incident being conducted

The U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is planning to join a pair of Canadian investigations already under way into last week's deadly friendly-fire episode in northern Iraq, but experts say if recent history is any guide, the public should temper its expectations about the findings.

In an interview Monday, Gen. Tom Lawson, the country's chief of defence staff, said the international headquarters overseeing the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is "interested in exactly what happened and therefore will be leading their own investigation."

The involvement of American commanders takes the concern about the deadly mistake — which claimed the life of 31-year-old Sgt. Andrew Doiron — to a completely different level, especially in light of a call for U.S. special forces to be operating at the front line.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke Monday with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who expressed his condolences over the death, Canada's first overseas casualty in the war against ISIL.

Defence Minister Jason Kenney implored opposition parties to let due process unfold.

There is a military police case and a technical investigation, known as a board of inquiry — both of which are standard procedure whenever a soldier dies in the line of duty.

As part of the technical investigation, the special forces are conducting their own internal review.

Even so, there are significant organizational and cultural barriers that cause both a former special forces commander and a leading defence analyst to wonder if anyone can be held responsible, and whether such calamities can truly be avoided in the future.

"Whether somebody will be held accountable for this, I don't know," said Roland Paris, director of the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa.

Prosecuting friendly-fire cases between nations, even among advanced western armies, is a tenuous matter, one usually fraught with diplomatic drawbacks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Obviously, our (special forces) operators are ensuring that steps are taken to ensure there is no repeat of this tragic incident."

Defence Minister Jason Kenney

Pamela Wallin accused of fraud

The RCMP has made a series of allegations against suspended senator Pamela Wallin. It's alleged she misrepresented corporate board meetings, dinner with a former lover and a personal medical appointment as Senate business to claim reimbursement for her expenses. Documents filed by the Mounties in court allege Wallin defrauded the Senate by making 150 "suspicious" expense claims. No charges have been laid against Wallin, who was suspended last year, and none of the allegations have been proven in court. Wallin is pictured at a media scrum Nov. 5, 2013, outside the Senate on Parliament Hill. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Veterans

Tories propose retirement benefit

The Tories are proposing a new retirement benefit to help stave off old-age financial hardship for some of Canada's severely disabled soldiers, addressing a long-standing concern of veterans' advocates. The benefit would provide troops with injuries a monthly income support payment beginning at age 65, Veterans Affairs Minister Erin O'Toole said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Islamic cyber-pirates

Bloc Québécois website hacked

Islamic cyber-pirates said Monday they attacked the website of the Bloc Québécois because of the party's position against the wearing of a veil during citizenship ceremonies. Several other sites that were hosted by the same server as the Bloc's were also targeted, including the website for a campsite.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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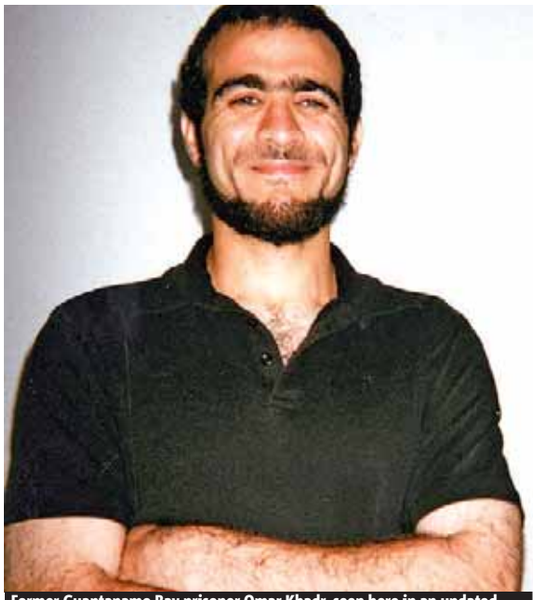
Khadr's bail application draws long list of backers



Former Guantanamo Bay prisoner Omar Khadr, seen here in an undated photo. COURTESY BOWDEN INSTITUTION/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Response. The federal government has said it will fight any effort to lessen the former Guantanamo Bay prisoner's punishment

Professors, doctors, businessmen and even a former senior member of the U.S. military have put their names — and reputations — on the line to support the bail application of a man the Canadian government and other detractors have branded a dangerous jihadi terrorist.

Foremost among those backing Omar Khadr are his long-time lawyer Dennis Edney and his wife Patricia, who have offered to take him into their home if he wins bail.

Edney, who has met the Toronto-born Khadr in prison, says she finds him gentle, articulate and gracious.

Khadr's application for bail — to be heard over two days later this month — aims to get him out of Bowden Institution in Innisfail, Alta., while he is appealing his conviction on five war-crimes charges by a U.S. military commission for incidents that occurred in Afghanistan when he was 15 years old.

In their letters for bail court, Arlette Zinck and her businessman husband Rob Betty make clear their positive assessment of Khadr.

Zinck, an English professor at King's University and one of Khadr's tutors for years, calls him a diligent and capable "model student."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I am proud to count him among my closest friends."

Rob Betty, husband of King's University English professor Arlette Zinck who has been Omar Khadr's tutor for years.

Q&A

Lawyer's wife speaks out

Patricia Edney is the wife of Dennis Edney, lawyer to Omar Khadr. The couple has agreed to take Khadr, 28, into their Edmonton home if he is released on bail. The Canadian Press interviewed Patricia Edney ahead of Khadr's bail hearing in late March.

Does Dennis bring home his clients on a regular basis – to live with you?

Patricia Edney: It's consistent, offering Omar to come to our home. It's consistent with Dennis's faith in Omar, his confidence in the case and the young man that we have both come to know. In my mind, it's a fairly straightforward proposition. Hopefully, we're actually able to have him come.

But this is a little different from the normal routine of lawyers and clients?

Patricia Edney: That speaks to the fact that we see him as more than a client. We see him as somebody who's been abandoned by his government and suffered greatly for it. It's something we can offer.

The government, of course, brands him as a hardened, unrepentant terrorist.

Patricia Edney: There's lots of evidence that he didn't kill (U.S. Sgt.) Christopher Speer ... But even if he did, he was a child soldier. Omar was 15 when this all took place. He was a child. He is carrying a burden that is not his.

What was it like to meet him and get to know him?

Patricia Edney: It was wonderful to first meet him. I wasn't surprised at how gentle he was, or how articulate and intelligent and gracious. It was more surprise at how tall he was. It was the physical stuff that Dennis would never have thought to fill me in on. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Nine abducted by ISIL in oilfield attack

Libya. Seizure of foreign workers last week also saw militants behead eight guards

Militants from Libya's Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant affiliate beheaded eight Libyan guards in an attack on a central oilfield last week in which the extremists abducted nine foreigners, a Libyan spokesman said Monday.

In the Philippines, authorities said Monday that four of their nationals were among the nine abducted from the oilfield. An Austrian, a Czech, a Bangladeshi and a Ghana national were also taken while one hostage remains unidentified.

Friday's attack on the al-Ghani oilfield near the town of Zalla, some 750 kilometres southeast of the capital, Tripoli, was part of a series of deadly assaults on Libya's lucrative oil infrastructure by the Islamic State group.

The attacks in recent weeks have forced Libya to declare 11 fields non-operational, including al-Ghani, and invoke a force majeure clause that exempts the state from contractual obligations.

Libya's military spokesman, Ahmed al-Mesmari, warned that ISIL militants' long-term goal is to take over Libya's petroleum industry.

Quoted

"This is the lifeline of the Libyan people."

Libya's military spokesman, Ahmed al-Mesmari, on the country's petroleum industry, adding that losing it to ISIL would be dire

During the attack on al-Ghani, an employee watched the beheadings of the eight oil guards and subsequently died of a heart attack, al-Mesmari also said. He did not elaborate on how the army knew about the beheadings but the force serving as oil guards is closely allied to the Libyan military, which answers to the eastern-based government, one of Libya's two rival governments.

In the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said Manila was working with the employer of the nine, Austrian-owned VAOS Oil Service, the Libyan government and embassies of the other foreigners abducted.

The incident brings the total number of Filipinos missing in Libya to seven. Three others were snatched in another oilfield Feb. 3 and their whereabouts also remain unknown.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine nears one-year mark since start of conflict

People pass by a destroyed building in Vuhlehirsk, Ukraine, on Monday. More than 6,000 people have died in eastern Ukraine since the start of the conflict almost a year ago that has led to a "merciless devastation of civilian lives and infrastructure," according to the UN human rights office.

VADIM GHIRDA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chad

Nations ramp up fight against Boko Haram

Soldiers from Chad and Niger launched the largest international push to defeat Nigeria's Islamic extremists, whose war has spilled over into neighbouring countries, officials and witnesses said Monday. Chad's president has warned that the leader of Boko Haram must surrender or be killed.

At least 200 vehicles full of soldiers were spotted by residents crossing from Niger into Nigeria. Loud detonations were soon heard, signalling heavy combat with Boko Haram, said Adam Boukarna, a resident of the border town of Bosso, Niger.

The push marks a sharp escalation by African nations against Boko Haram nearly six years after the group began its insurrection, and comes just weeks before Nigeria holds elections many fear will be marred by violence, including from Boko Haram.

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RICOH COLISEUM

Senators warn nuke deal may not last long

Politics. Republicans criticize lack of congressional approval

Forty-seven Republican senators warned on Monday that any agreement the Obama administration strikes with Iran to limit Tehran's nuclear program may be short-lived unless Congress approves the deal. The White House accused the Republicans of advocating a "rush to war."

In an open letter to Iranian leaders, freshman Sen. Tom Cotton and 46 other Republicans said that without congressional approval any deal between Iran and the U.S. would be merely an agreement between President Barack Obama and Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"The next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen," they wrote, "and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time."

The U.S. and other nations are seeking a pact that would let Western powers verify that Iran will not obtain a nuclear weapon.

At the White House, spokesman Josh Earnest said the Republican letter interferes with negotiations over limiting Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

"I would describe this letter as the continuation of a partisan strategy to undermine the president's ability to conduct foreign policy and advance our national security interests around the globe," Earnest said. "The rush to war or at least the rush to the military option that many Republicans are advocating is not at all in the best interest of the United States."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Racist chanters 'disgraceful': University of Oklahoma president

Students at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house load up a moving truck on Monday with their belongings at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Okla. President David Boren of the University of Oklahoma severed the school's ties with a national fraternity on Monday and ordered that its on-campus house be shuttered after several members took part in a racist chant caught in an online video. It shows several people on a bus participating in a chant that included a racial slur, referenced lynching and indicated black students would never be admitted to the university's chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

NICK OXFORD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alabama

Group recalls Bloody Sunday

About 100 people set out Monday to commemorate the historic "Bloody Sunday" demonstration and retrace the steps taken 50 years ago when demonstrators pushing for voting rights for blacks marched from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boston

Woman testifies at bombing trial

A woman testifying from her wheelchair Monday in the Boston Marathon bombing trial recalled shielding her husband from the sight of his mangled leg, being pushed to the ground as a bystander frantically tried to extinguish the flames on her body and coming to grips with becoming a double amputee.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lethal injection

Texas seeks more execution drugs

Texas' prison agency is scrambling to find a supplier to replenish its inventory of execution drugs, which will be used up if the state goes forward with two lethal injections scheduled for this week and next.

Prison officials only have enough pentobarbital for the scheduled executions of Manuel Vasquez on Wednesday and Randall Mays on March 18, and they don't know how they will conduct lethal injections on four others scheduled for April.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice declined to say why it has not been able to obtain more pentobarbital from the same compounding pharmacy that provided the current batch of the powerful sedative last March. The state switched to that source several months after its previous supplier cut ties, citing hate mail and potential litigation after its name became public through an open records request from The Associated Press. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Wisconsin.

Man police shot was a risk-taker: Report

An unarmed black man fatally shot by a white Wisconsin police officer faced a choice between a middle-class lifestyle and the gang world and tended to be an impulsive risk-taker, according to court documents.

The file connected to 19-year-old Tony Robinson's conviction last year for armed robbery shows he was diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and anxiety and depression. The documents were contained in a report by a state Department of Corrections agent.

Madison police officer Matt Kenny shot Robinson late Friday while investigating a call that the young man was jumping in and out of traffic and had assaulted someone. The officer heard a disturbance and forced his way into an apartment where Robinson had gone. Authorities said Kenny fired after Robinson assaulted him.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apple Watch unveiled

New product. Watch is the first brand-new device Apple has launched without Steve Jobs

Make calls, read email, control music, manage Instagram photos, keep up with your workout, pay for groceries, open your hotel room door. CEO Tim Cook says you can do it all from your wrist with Apple Watch — for 18 hours a day. That's how long the battery will last.

Pre-orders start April 10. In Canada, the devices will range from $449 to as much as $22,000 for a luxury edition.

Industry watchers are eager to see if Apple's version will be the tipping point for the sluggish smartwatch market. There was similar skepticism when Apple released the iPad in 2010, yet the company has successfully sold millions and its popularity has shaken up the PC market.

Apple is entering a market in which numerous tech companies are already selling smartwatches, from the Samsung Gear and Motorola's Moto 360 to the Pebble Steel and other models made by smaller startups. Many run on Android Wear, the software platform from Google. They range in price from $100 to $500 or more, but most don't have as many features as the Apple Watch.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the Apple Watch Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Supermarkets

Loblaw planning $1.2B expansion

Loblaw Companies Ltd. says it will build 50 new stores and renovate or improve more than 100 existing stores across the country in 2015, creating about 5,000 jobs.

The company will also look to make more investments in its e-commerce offering, supply chain and IT infrastructure. The initiatives are expected to top $1.2 billion in 2015.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
79.39¢ (+ 0.09¢)

TSX
14,854.49 (- 98.01)

OIL
$50.00 US (+ 39¢)

GOLD
$1,166.50 US (+ $2.20)

Natural gas: $2.678 US (- 0.7¢)
Dow Jones: 17,995.72 (+ 138.94)

Alberta. Tainted feed not yet proved as BSE source

Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz says figuring out how an Alberta cow was infected with BSE is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The beef breeding cow was discovered last month on a farm near Edmonton and was born on a nearby farm. Another cow born at the same location in 2004 tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy in 2010.

Officials have said that no material from either cow made it into human or animal food.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency continues the complex task of checking cattle born on the farm to see whether they may have been exposed to the same feed as the BSE cow, although it hasn't been determined yet whether infected feed caused the disease in this case.

Ritz says a number of countries that have temporarily suspended imports of Canadian beef are being kept in the loop, but he points out they only account for about five per cent of Canada's worldwide market.

Ritz was in Calgary for the official opening of the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence. Ottawa invested $3.4 million to help set up the centre, which is being operated by Canada Beef Inc., a national organization that handles research, marketing and promotion of the Canadian cattle and beef industry worldwide.

The facility will provide space and resources to help the industry promote new products, training and education focused on the technical advantages of Canadian beef.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gerry Ritz, minister of agriculture, slices beef at the opening of the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence in Calgary on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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VOICES

THE SHENANIGANS STAMP

Politicians tend to promise more than they can deliver to get themselves elected, which is why we should empower city staff to call out projects that can't deliver

YOUR RIDE
Glyn Bowerman

Cost overruns, protracted timelines, sheepish civil servants, and ostentatiously outraged politicians:

We must be talking transit in Toronto.

Last week we heard the Line 1 subway extension to Vaughan is $400 million over budget, and the opening date has been pushed back to 2017.

That same week, the executive committee moved to request a report from the TTC, explaining why we will be unable to replace our aging, 61-year-old signalling system until 2020. New Automatic Train Control would increase capacity on our existing subways, easing congestion without building a brand new line. So where is it?

It may seem like these delays are a perpetual problem for our city's major infrastructure projects. Mayor John Tory was quick to call a press conference last week, questioning city staff's work ethic. People want to see heads roll for this.

But, before we wheel out the National Razor, let's take a breather and consider why delays happen. They happen, largely, because — apart from any true benefit to the city — mega-projects are often centrepieces of a given government's platform. This is especially true during election time.

Rob Ford ran on subways. The provincial Liberals ran on the Big Move. John Tory ran on SmartTrack. It is practical, during an election, for a politician to paint a beautiful, if improbable picture of the boundless utopia we will all enjoy if we elect them. In promising these projects, politicians lowball us on the price, and greatly underestimate the time it will take to build.

Signal lights, like the one being put together here by TTC instructor Karim Rajan, are among the things due for an upgrade on Toronto's aging transit system. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Add to that a particular cognitive bias, (to pick up on last week's theme). As Eric Jaffe explains in a 2013 CityLab column, something known as the "planning fallacy" may be at work.

"People are saddled with a cognitive bias that causes them to be unjustifiably upbeat (some might say delusional) about the prospects of their own plans," Jaffe writes.

Still, many want to see somebody fired. But, it's hard to say who deserves the blame. Should it be TTC CEO Andy Byford? There's precedent. After all, his predecessor, Gary Webster, was fired after a disagreement with Rob Ford.

Maybe we should fire retiring City Manager Joe Pennachetti, the guy Tory begged to stay with us, just a little longer, until we get our bearings.

Personally, I tend to sympathize with city staff because they are not especially empowered to say "no" to an elected official, and they have very little opportunity to call "shenanigans" without retribution (see Gary Webster).

So here's the fix: Give staff that power.

Let's give staff a big rubber "shenanigans" stamp, to label projects that grossly underestimate the time, money and resources required to deliver a given project. That way, the next time we elect someone to dream the impossible dream, when our incredibly low-priced mega-project fails to arrive on schedule, we can look for that stamp and cease to wonder why.

DO YOU HAVE A TRANSIT IDEA?
Shoot us an email:
toronto@metronews.ca

Glyn Bowerman is a Toronto-based journalist and theatre artist. He is also a regular contributor to Spacing Magazine. Follow him on Twitter @Banquos_Banquet

Apple Watch: Addressing problems that never were problems

JUSTIN LEE
readers@metronews.ca

Apple announced Monday details about its heavily-anticipated, yet arguably unnecessary Apple Watch, which hits shelves next month.

The smart watch connects to iPhone 5 or later models to receive notifications about incoming mail, messages, calls and events, and is loaded with enough features to impress Penny from Inspector Gadget.

In fact, the Apple Watch seems nothing more than a micro version of an iPhone or iPad.

But instead of having to physically reach for the device, you have immediate access — anytime or anywhere — since you're physically wearing it.

By being "plugged in" round the clock, you'll never miss a chance to apply a Valencia filter to that kale salad post or "swipe left" whenever you see a profile pic of some sociopath canoodling with a tiger.

"Communication" technology

Instead of bringing us closer together, this so-called communication technology has transformed us into a more distant, jaded, and colder culture.

And I suppose that's the greatest drawback to technology in the 21st century — that it somehow addresses problems that never were considered problems in the first place.

Back in the day, advancements in technology were wholly necessary. We didn't have a means to travel far distances in a reasonable amount of time, so we invented planes, trains and automobiles. We didn't have a way to verbally communicate with our friends, families, and pushy telemarketers who interrupt our dinner, so we invented the telephone.

But at what point has anyone ever said, "Gee, I really wish there was some way I could instantly access an entire library on the go, even though I can only physically read one book at a time. You never know when you might feel compelled to reread that titillating tampon scene in Fifty Shades of Grey."

Or when was the last time anyone has ever thought, "I really wish I had a pair of glasses that would allow me to view a video clip of a sunrise instead of an actual sunrise"?

Civilization has become so consumed with inventing new and efficient ways to perform even the most innocuous of tasks.

Twenty years ago, we would take time out of our busy lives to talk to our friends and family in person or over the phone.

Now we can't even seem to reply to a simple text.

Instead of bringing us closer together, this so-called communication technology has transformed us into a more distant, jaded, and colder culture.

Technology has become a never-ending cycle: We create solutions to problems, which in turn generates a new set of problems that we need to tackle.

To quote Damon Albarn of Blur, "We're everyday robots in control / in the process of being sold / Driving in adjacent cars / 'Til you press restart."

Although the Apple Watch will not help you foil Dr. Claw's latest evil plan, it certainly might bring Apple one step closer to achieving world domination.

Justin Lee is a Toronto-based writer, DJ and documentary filmmaker who enjoys exploring music, arts and culture and social issues.

metro
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Filmmaking

Director pleads guilty in train crash death

The director of a movie about musician Gregg Allman pleaded guilty Monday in a train crash that killed a camera assistant and injured six film workers. In exchange, prosecutors dropped charges against his wife and business partner.

The case is a rare example of filmmakers being prosecuted for deaths on their sets.

As part of the plea deal, director Randall Miller will spend two years in the county jail and another eight on probation on involuntary manslaughter and criminal trespassing charges. He also will pay a $20,000 fine.

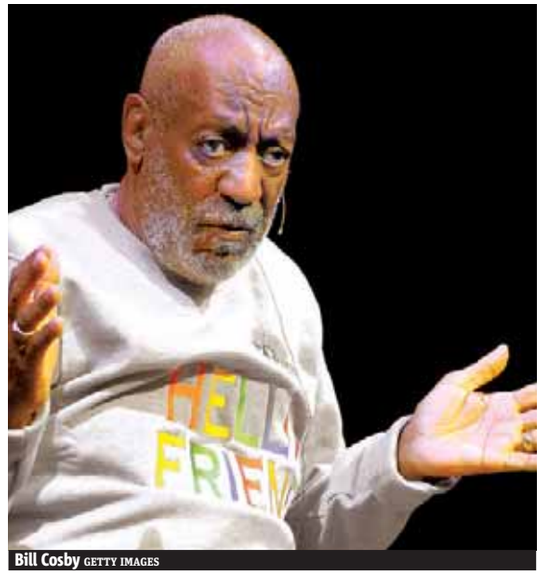
In the crash a year ago, a freight train travelling 55 m.p.h. plowed into the director's crew on a Georgia railroad bridge.

The Midnight Rider movie has been in limbo since the crash. Allman sued Miller to prevent the director from reviving the film. They settled out of court last year, and terms were not disclosed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Film director Randall Miller THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cosby promo fail



Bill Cosby GETTY IMAGES

Showing further signs of not-terribly-great judgment, Bill Cosby released an awkward, amateur-ish video message to promote an upcoming gig. In it, the embattled comic icon is on the phone trying to convince someone to come see the show. "You know I'll be hilarious," he says in the 10-second clip, first released to ABC News. He accompanied the video with a written message: "Dear fans, I hope you enjoy my wonderful video message," he writes. "Hey, hey, hey, I'm far from finished." While the video might not be as wonderful as he insists, it does raise a lot of questions: Is that a rotary phone? Why is this shot like an ISIS hostage video? Are those silk pyjamas? Also, can we address how terrible a slogan "I'm far from finished" is for a man accused of more than 30 separate acts of sexual assault?

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Simpsons co-creator dies

Sam Simon, a co-creator of The Simpsons and animal-rights advocate who made a midlife career shift into philanthropy and channeled much of his personal fortune into social causes, has died. Simon died Sunday at his home in Pacific Palisades, Calif., his agent, Andy Patman said. He was 59. He was diagnosed with advanced colon cancer in 2011. Simon helped launch The Simpsons in 1989.

"I'm not sad," he declared in 2013 as he battled an illness that his doctors said might claim him within months. "I'm happy. I don't feel angry and bitter. I want to do whatever I can to survive."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sam Simon THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Video may prove Suge is innocent

Graphic video footage has surfaced of the Jan. 29 hit-and-run incident near the Los Angeles set of the film Straight Outta Compton that landed Death Row Records founder Suge Knight behind bars, according to TMZ. The video, taken from the surveillance footage of a burger joint where the incident took place, will be used as evidence by both the prosecution and the defence in any upcoming trial, as Knight's defence team believe the footage exonerates their client by proving he was the victim of an armed ambush.

Suge Knight GETTY IMAGES

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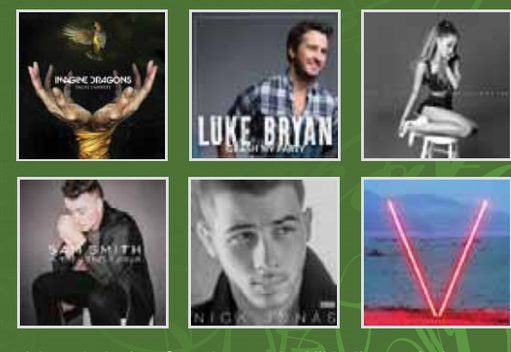

SCENE

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Sharlto Copley, left, and Susan Heyward act out a scene from Powers. The series' 10-episode first season is the latest blossoming of scripted TV fare from unexpected sources — the home base for Powers is the PlayStation network. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PlayStation harnesses the Powers of television

New series. Adapted from a comic, scripted drama is a first for the gaming network

Quoted

"Some people think our show is webisodes. But this is a fully budgeted, network-style show."

Powers co-creator Brian Michael Bendis

Ability does not imply accomplishment. And accomplishment is no prerequisite for fame.

This we know all too well from reality TV. But today's viral sprawl of celebrity is explored in fresh fashion by a new series spawned from what some viewers might deem an unlikely source: comic books.

Powers is a new series whose 10-episode season is the latest blossoming of scripted TV fare from unexpected sources. PlayStation network is home base for the show, the first original scripted series on the network.

Starting Tuesday, Powers will be free to PlayStation subscribers, with the first episode free to anyone for streaming through the PlayStation Store website (a PlayStation console is not required). Subsequent episodes will be available for purchase by non-subscribers.

Powers is set in a two-tier society where ordinary humans must coexist with a superior class who, thanks to random distribution, are endowed with superpowers which they employ for good or, just as often, for non-heroic purposes like crime.

Maintaining order among superhumans places a heavy burden on law enforcement. Powers focuses on a pair of homicide detectives, Christian Walker (played by Sharlto Copley) and Deena Pilgrim. They investigate cases involving those people of disruptive privilege known as Powers.

Walker used to be a superstar superhero, with a superbad-guy reputation. But then his powers disappeared.

The department's only cop who can identify with the Powers elite, he is haunted by memories of flying and other abilities he once possessed.

Powers has been in development for the screen for 15 years, says series co-creator Brian Michael Bendis, who created the comic in 2000 with Michael Avon Oeming. It was first adapted as a possible film project, then evolved into this series and was snapped up by PlayStation. He acknowledges there might be a bit of confusion about the PlayStation venue.

"Some people think our show is webisodes," he says with a laugh. "But this is a fully budgeted, network-style show. And what I want for it isn't a faithful adaptation, word-for-word, of the comic, but almost like a parallel universe, with the same theme and characters, telling its own story and going its own way."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Instagram improv show has on-air potential

A new interactive Instagram series from American comedian Chris Hardwick's @midnight kicked off on Monday but its future depends entirely on an active, imaginative fan base.

Crammed into 15 seconds, the first episode of Plot Twistagram features a drowsy young man who heads to the kitchen to make some breakfast. After electrocuting himself making some burnt toast he comes face-to-face with some seemingly radioactive cereal — and, enter the cliffhanger. It will be up to viewers to decide what happens next by leaving a comment on the photo-sharing app.

For now, this off-air spin of the eponymous weeknight Internet-inspired improv game show, which aptly airs at midnight, will only take place on Instagram. However, Mashable reports that depending on audience response, the concept could become an on-air game show. The show's team will select the best scenario and film it to be shown every Monday. Joe Farrell, co-executive producer of @midnight said the show will ultimately become a whole comedy based on Instagram comments. AFP

Who needs a noggin when the answers to life's questions are always at your fingertips. ISTOCK

Not-so-smartphone?

Wellness. Researchers examining whether smartphones are making users lazier and less astute

Having the world at our fingertips diminishes the role of our brains in daily life, according to researchers in Canada.

"Decades of research has revealed that humans are eager to avoid expending effort when problem-solving, and it seems likely that people will increasingly use their smartphones as an extended mind," says lead author Nathaniel Barr, a post-doctoral researcher in reasoning and decision making at the University of Waterloo.

Highly intelligent people approach problem-solving in a manner that's analytical rather than intuitive, yet smartphones allow them to second-guess themselves, say the researchers.

The problem leaves no one behind, for intuitive thinkers who rely on their gut instinct simply turn to their devices rather than their brainpower.

In three experiments that involved a total of 660 participants, the research team analyzed users' smartphone habits in relation to their cognitive style and verbal and quantitative skills.

The same participants performed better on the same tests and demonstrated greater willingness to think analytically when they were separated from their smartphones, according to the study.

"Our research provides support for an association between heavy smartphone use and lowered intelligence," says co-author Gordon Pennycook, a PhD candidate in psychology at the University of Waterloo.

"Whether smartphones actually decrease intelligence is still an open question that requires future research."

The study, published in the journal Computers in Human Behavior, bears grim implications on the cognition of an aging population.

"Our reliance on smartphones and other devices will likely only continue to rise," says Barr.

"It's important to understand how smartphones affect and relate to human psychology before these technologies are so fully ingrained that it's hard to recall what life was like without them. We may already be at that point."

To recall what life was like in the pre-smartphone era, try leaving the house without it every once in a while — it might do more good than harm.

AFP

Therapy

Latest adult colouring book focuses on anti-stress benefit

A growing trend among adults, colouring books are said to help de-stress and unwind and are slowly taking off outside Europe, where the trend originated.

The latest example, Colour Therapy: An Anti-Stress Colouring Book, is out this week in Britain before heading to the other side of the Atlantic in June.

A way of passing the time and clearing one's thoughts — during breaks from Candy Crush, at least — colouring books began taking off in France a few years ago and have grown increasingly popular there; among them, books by Lisa Magano have been nearly instant hits and Secret Garden (sold in France as "Jardin secret") by Johanna Basford was a success in 2013.

Basford's book also became a popular title in the U.K., where the trend is picking up speed. AFP

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Highs hindered by health hazards

Health. New study on the effects of marijuana could make road to legalization a little less smooth

MATT LEE
Metro in New York City

Will the progress of the legalization movement go up in smoke as information about allergies grows? ISTOCK

As marijuana legalization advocates cheer on the growing support for their cause, a new study out of the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center in San Antonio, Texas has warned of a growing number of instances in which patients are diagnosed with an allergy to cannabis.

The study calls the allergy "unconventional" and emphasizes that as more states move toward full legalization, that this allergy could become more prevalent.

Metro spoke with allergy and immunology specialist Dr. Purvi Parikh of the Allergy & Asthma Network and NYU Langone Medical Center to get a better understanding of the marijuana allergy.

Can you break down the basics of what this allergy is all about ?

You can be allergic to anything, that's the nature of how allergies are, but now that more states are legalizing marijuana it's coming to the forefront. It's not that the allergy is new but it's now being more recognized.

The allergen is the plant itself, called Cannabis sativa. That plant itself can cause a lot of allergic symptoms in people ... hay fever symptoms, itchy eyes, stuffy nose. It can cause asthma, or even more severe allergic reactions like anaphylactic shock.

It's a unique type of allergen because it's something that you know is inhaled and can also be (acquired) through second-hand smoke.

I've seen one patient that suffered from very bad breathing problems, and she herself didn't smoke marijuana, but all of her neighbours around her did. She was getting a lot of exposure through heating vents and air ducts.

It is a public health concern as marijuana does become more legalized because more states may start growing it.

The production of it can release allergens into the air. The same way pollen travels through the air, marijuana itself can also produce a pollen.

How does one get this allergy?

Even if you're not allergic to the actual plant, I've noticed a lot of people with either mould or dust-mite allergies have problems with marijuana because when it's sitting around it does become mouldy, it does accumulate dust mites.

There are even other allergens that can complicate the picture, too. It (can be acquired) through inhalation, through touching it, handling it, breathing it in, and ingestion.

There are many different ways that it can affect somebody. That's what makes it a little more unique than some of the other allergens.

I think we will be seeing more cases of this allergy, and more people will be likely to report it, because if something is illegal I think people are less likely to mention that they have a problem with it or report an issue it.

How common is this allergy?

Currently I don't think that data exists in terms of the percentage nationwide. Right now what I do know is that it's pretty rare, and rarely reported at this point.

I don't know if that's just because people are timid about reporting it (it is an illegal substance in most states), or if it's just the prevalence has not come to the forefront yet.

Quoted

"I think we will be seeing more cases of this allergy, and more people will be likely to report it, because if something is illegal I think people are less likely to mention that they have a problem with it or report an issue it."

Dr. Purvi Parikh
NYU Langone Medical Center

For your phone

Step Buy Step: A Pedometer Adventure (iPhone; $2.29)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

Every step you take in the real world goes towards unlocking adorable companions and completing challenges in this imaginative adventure inspired by Jules Verne's Around The World In 80 Days.

Sweet dreams

A little less sleep, a little more weight

Sleeping 30 minutes less than necessary can have long-term consequences for body weight and metabolism, according to a new study conducted by the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar — even if you sleep in on weekends. AFP

Health Solutions

Learn to love Brussels sprouts

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Brussels sprouts are little baby cabbages with all of the same nutrients.

They are absolutely adorable when they grow on a tall, sturdy stock and look like little buttons.

They are hearty, cold-weather vegetables that can handle a frost or two, which is why they are usually harvested in fall.

Raw and fresh, they do require about the same kind of attention as green beans in that they need to be trimmed of the woody end.

Honestly, this is one of the vegetables that I actually prefer to buy frozen. Straight out of the freezer, they are more tender and pre-trimmed so a quick steam makes a weeknight meal a breeze.

Nutritionally they do pack a punch with one sprout providing 35 per cent of a day's worth of vitamin K.

They are also high in vitamins C and A as well as potassium and fibre making them the perfect heart-healthy choice.

The trick to brussel sprouts is to not overcook them. Doing so creates a disgusting sulphur smell.

You do, however, have to score them to be sure they cook through the tougher base. Roasting helps to caramelize the sugars and make for a sweeter, softer vegetable pleasure.

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

Veggie meal's protein punch

Dinner. Instead of boiling mini cabbages, try roasting them in this low-calorie Tofu and Brussels Sprouts side dish

This recipe makes four main servings, or eight side-dish servings. THERESA ALBERT

Tofu has long been discussed as a functional food for managing menopause because of its plant-based estrogen. But it is also a great, low-calorie, lean protein that can be delicious when roasted with Brussels sprouts.

This is a great side dish but it is also a perfect vegetarian meal on its own. Simply bake the dish in single serving dishes and top with a bit of Parmesan cheese.

Ingredients

- 4 cups frozen baby Brussels sprouts
- 6-8 oz organic firm tofu, small cubes
- 1 tbsp melted butter
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp ground flax
- Sea salt and pepper

1. Toss Brussels sprouts with tofu and spread into a large, low casserole. Drizzle and toss with melted butter and sprinkle with thyme.

2. Bake in 400 F oven for 20-25 minutes until they begin to brown.

3. Mix together Parmesan cheese and ground flax; salt and pepper as desired. Sprinkle on top and bake for 5-10 more minutes.

THERESA ALBERT

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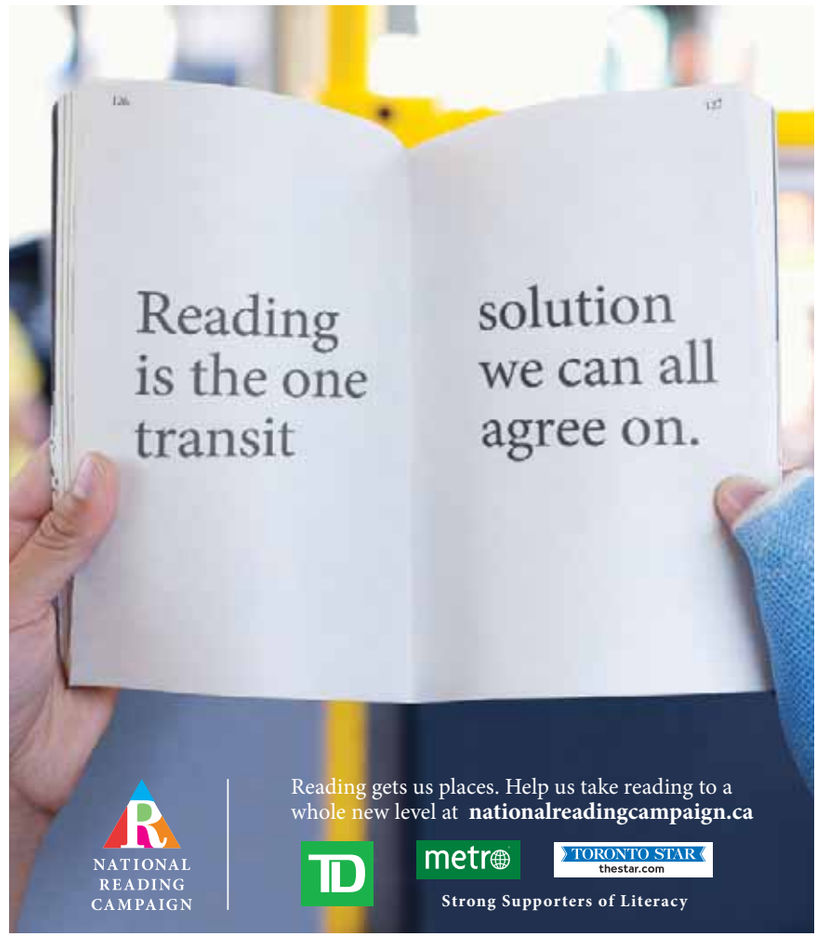

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The jobs of summer aren't gone quite yet

Employment. Recruitment for summer work is already in full swing

CELINE TARRANT
TalentEgg.ca

A lucky few have a summer job offer in hand, but if you haven't, don't worry. There's still time to land that seasonal gig — here's how.

Update your resumé, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile

It's time to dust off the most recent version of your resumé, and make sure it's fully up to date. If you are adding quite a bit of new information, you may need to remove some older experience off your resumé. Be sure to pay special attention to formatting; since recruiters scan through these documents quickly, it should be optimized for readability.

While your cover letter should, of course, be customized for each position, it's a good idea to have a generic template prepared with your best stories and experiences. It will provide a good jumping off point for job-specific cover letters later on.

Resumés no longer just live on paper. Don't forget to update various digital versions of your resumé, whether it be your LinkedIn profile, other professional profiles, or a personal website. Anywhere online where you may have a resumé uploaded, make sure you replace it with your updated one.

Apply to postings — but not every posting

Many people believe that the more jobs you apply to, the better chance you have of getting a call back. This is true to some extent, but when you start firing off resumés and generic cover letters to postings that don't fit with your profile or career goals at all just for the sake of applying, hiring managers can tell.

It's often better to do a few things well than do many things poorly, and this definitely holds true for job applications. Be at least somewhat selective in applying to job postings. Only apply to companies and roles you've really researched, and can prepare a stellar and customized application for. You need to be able to tie all your past experience, skills, and interests into a compelling story about why you should have the job you seek. If you find you are really stretching to make that connection, it's probably not the right job for you.

If you have entrepreneurial aspirations, consider starting your own business for the summer. Programs like Summer Company offer grants to students who aim to work for themselves. ISTOCK

Leverage your network

LinkedIn is a great way to leverage your personal network to find a summer job. Search companies you are interested in on LinkedIn, and see who in your network works there. If it's someone you have a second- or third-degree connection with, try to get someone to introduce you. If you can't get a formal introduction, send a short message and bio, and ask if you can speak with them further by email or phone.

You can also filter search results by what school people attended, which is a great way to find alumni from your school who are currently working at companies you are interested in. Reaching out to alumni is a great networking strategy, since you already have something in common.

For contacts that you have a more personal relationship with (like friends and family), make sure to let them know that you are hunting for a summer internship, and give them an updated copy of your resumé.

Send cold emails

Applying to live postings is only half the battle. Research other companies you are interested in that might not have summer job postings. Check company websites for contact information and see if there is someone you can reach out to with a cold email.

The response rate on cold emails is higher than you might think. Even if you can't get directly in touch with a decision-maker, many people are happy to answer questions and connect you with the right person.

Update your portfolio

Summer job-hunting is the perfect reason to make sure your portfolio is fully up to date. Take this time to refresh your portfolio with your latest and greatest accomplishments.

Reviewing your portfolio periodically is a good exercise to provide you with inspiration for your cover letters and interviews. Sometimes it's easy to forget your own accomplishments, and this process will keep everything top of mind as you go through the summer recruitment season.

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Campus connections

SHUTTERSTOCK

It wasn't exactly love at first pass when Kimberly Grattan and her now-husband Andrew Kelly met during a pick-up volleyball game at Brock University in St. Catharines. Grattan, a first-year kinesiology student, teased the third-year accounting major with a not-so-flattering name and playful banter ensued.

"He was a terrible volleyball player and I was pretty good at the time so I was a little cocky," she says. "But he started playing regularly and all of a sudden I started getting invited to all the volleyball parties through social media. I didn't really realize that it was always him that was inviting me."

Grattan and Kelly are one of many couples who chose to pursue a romantic relationship while in their university or college years. And while not all similar stories end up with a voyage down the altar, campuses are a popular testing ground for serious partnerships.

But are one's post-secondary years the optimal time to enter into a relationship? Susan D. Boon, an associate professor in the department of psychology at the University of Alberta, says yes, as long as students manage their expectations.

"Achieving your goals for intimacy are an important part of what people do developmentally at all stages of life," says Boon, who specializes in interpersonal relationships. "You need to be certain that you're willing to devote the time and attention and effort to relationship. Are you compromising other goals by dedicating that time and energy and attention?"

She says that while these thoughts should be taken into consideration, there is no right or wrong time for finding love. Post-secondary school, in fact, can be a great time to start exploring.

"If you're starting university right out of high school, you're probably not in a settled career or have a high demand job yet — it's a great time to learn and be open. Take the lessons that you do learn and try and gain as much value from the experiences that you have whether positive or negative."

– Elizabeth Beddall

CONTRIBUTED

BUILD ON SKILLS, ABILITIES AT YORK

For some new arrivals to Canada, the distance between existing qualifications and finding a job in their field can be broad. Thanks to York University, bridging that gap can start as early as this summer.

"We complement their skills and abilities with professional requirements and Canadian content," says Nora Priestly, program manager of York's bridging program for internationally educated professionals. "The people in this program have at least one degree, a good command of the English language, and at least three years of relevant work experience.

"Our students have so much to offer the economy — 70 per cent of them have master's and PhD's — but just need some gap bridging to be able to contribute."

The program lasts two to three semesters and evening classes are offered to help students balance existing work/education requirements. With bridging programs in business, information technology, and human resources, students can join a summer session, which requires application by mid-March.

"What's different about our program is students take university courses and get a certificate from York," she says. "We encourage people to visit our site and come in to learn more. It's important to talk to us so that they're making an informed decision about their future."

For more, visit makemore.info.yorku.ca.

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Athabasca University's master of arts — integrated studies (MA-IS) degree program provides graduate students with a unique opportunity to take a program of study that spans the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The part-time program requires students to put together their own study program based on the area on which they have chosen to concentrate. There are about a dozen focus areas, ranging from educational, cultural, and equity studies to global change, writing and new media, and work, organization and leadership.

Students are taught to think holistically, critically, and reflectively, and to focus on the articulations and points of overlap between specialized and generalized knowledge, says Wendell Kisner, MA-IS program director.

Learning integrates theories, methods and practices from the arts, humanities and social sciences. Exposure to a range of disciplines and interdisciplinary methods prepares students to discover innovative solutions to a variety of problems, he says.

CONTRIBUTED

"We're unique in the way we address integration. Each MA-IS course is a learning event, in which an ensemble of learners brings about the integration of interdisciplinary approaches to issues important to them through their collective, as well as individual work. As part of that ensemble, the instructor contributes his/her specific disciplinary expertise, as well as skills of facilitation and mentoring."

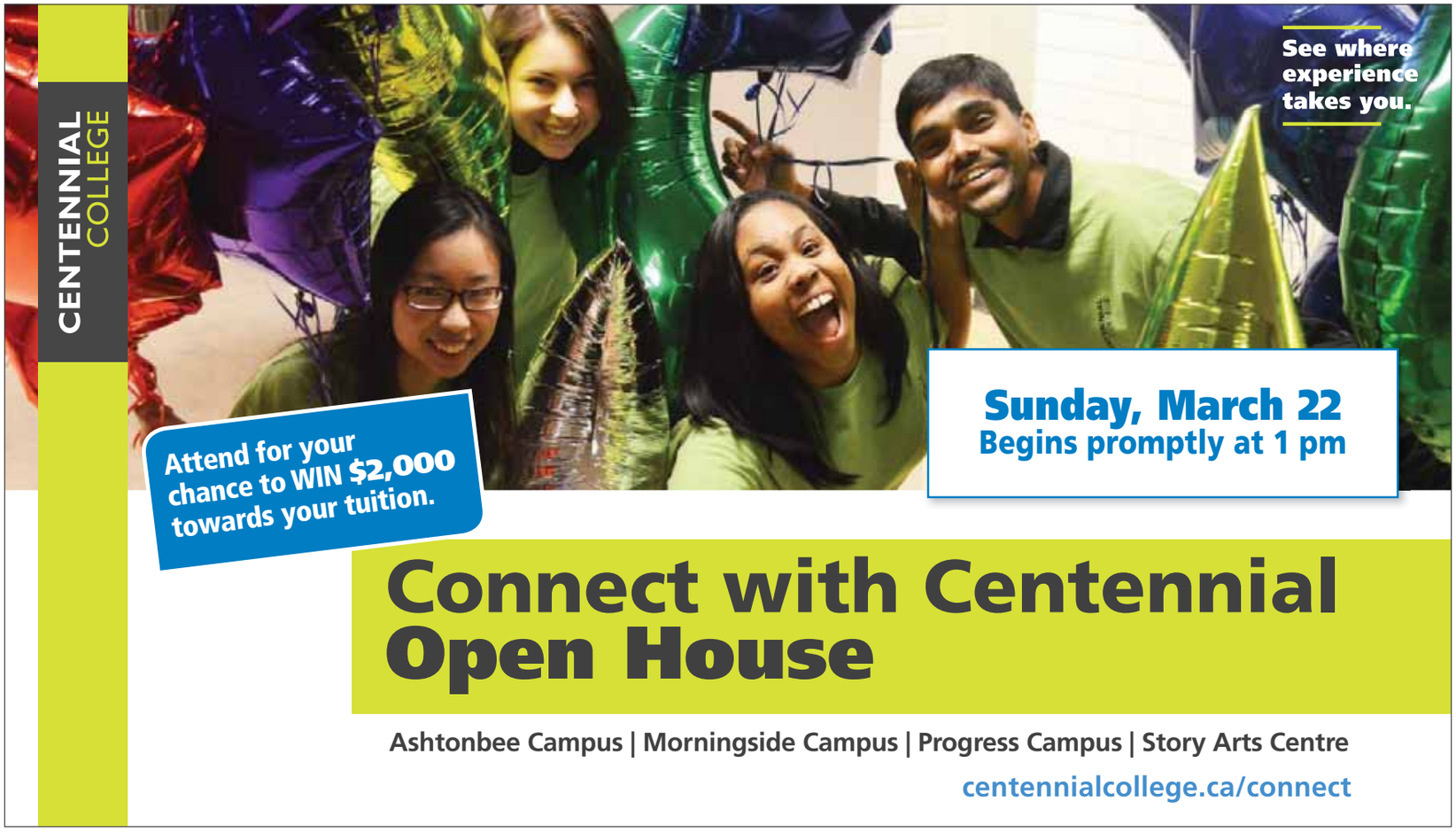
> ***"WE'RE UNIQUE IN THE WAY WE ADDRESS INTEGRATION. EACH MA-IS COURSE IS A LEARNING EVENT."***
>
> ***– Wendell Kisner, Athabasca University MA-IS program director***

Athabasca University is an open university that makes education as accessible as possible to people who might otherwise not be able to attend university. Most students take the programs as part-time distance learning students. They do their programs online from where they live without having to quit their jobs to study full time.

MA-IS is a 33-credit program with 12 credits counting towards the focus area.

"We're actually seeing a renaissance in interdisciplinary study in academia," Kisner says. "All kinds of issues require this approach if we're going to be relevant to the modern world."

For more, visit mais.athabascau.ca.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SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTOS

Centennial's fresh approach to arts, culture

Study at the Story Arts Centre

Centennial College is on the forefront in all of its offerings, but the Story Arts Centre campus in particular explodes with a fresh, entrepreneurial approach to arts and culture across a wide range of disciplines.

"The Story Arts Centre at Pape and Mortimer is a beautiful campus where students in communications, media and design come together to collaborate and inspire each other," says Kelly McConvey, program supervisor, communications — professional writing, Centennial College.

And to inspire individuals to enter into a career in the arts, Centennial's communications — professional writing program and new arts management program will connect students to the industry and prepare them for exciting careers in these fields.

The communications — professional writing program will prepare graduates to work in a variety of communications roles.

"Writers in today's job market need to be flexible and adaptable," McConvey says. "We teach students to create effective content for any project and audience, by analyzing the audience's needs and adapting their voice."

Students will have the opportunity to develop professional quality portfolio pieces in technical writing, web copy writing, report writing, speech writing, proposal writing, e-learning design, information design, and social media.

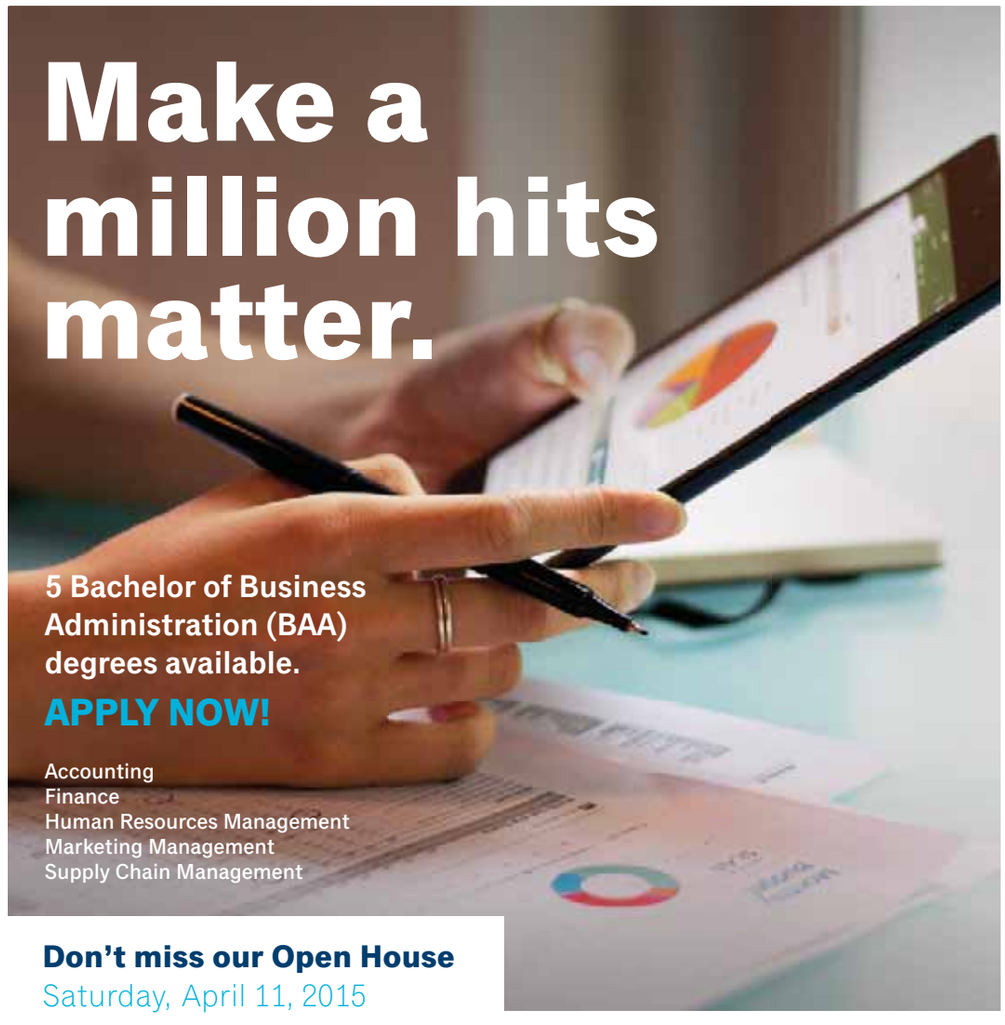
"There really are no limits to a career as a professional writer," McConvey says.

The new eight-month graduate certificate program in arts management will prepare those with a post-secondary degree/diploma — and who have an arts background — with the skills, knowledge and network to transition into a career in arts management.

"You will be the leaders who bring audiences to the art," says Shelley Crawford, program co-ordinator, arts management, Centennial College. "This is a program that will provide access to those who are willing to teach, counsel and support your integration into the field of arts management."

Students learn the most advanced methods of building audiences, raising funds through sponsorships, foundations and individuals, and, most importantly, they will be taught how to think critically and strategically on how best to manage an arts organization's human resources, finances and general operations.

For more information about either of these programs, or Centennial College, visit centennialcollege.ca.



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Sheridan College has defined pathways as "different routes that students may take to progress through the education system. The pathway system assists qualified students to move between post-secondary institutions or programs without repeating prior, relevant learning."

Sheridan has more than 700 possible pathways available for students who are either looking to go into a different program within the college or transfer their credits to another institution.

"Sheridan has made it an institutional priority to enhance pathways for students, and is focusing on creating seamless pathways for its current and prospective students, who may choose to transfer credits from their diplomas and advanced diplomas into a degree," says Sherri Murray, co-ordinator, academic operations and pathways, Sheridan College.

"Sheridan continues to expand its degree offerings, providing more opportunities for students who are interested in transferring their existing credentials towards the completion of a degree program here."

Sheridan has a number of degrees that students may transfer into, whether they have completed a diploma (two-year), advanced diploma (three-year), or postgraduate certificate.

In addition, Sheridan has a growing database of 30,000 course equivalencies and an online service that enables students to identify which academic courses may be considered for transfer from their previous learning to their Sheridan program.

"Sheridan also recognizes that the learning outcomes of an individual course or program may be achieved by a number of different means, including relevant work/life experience, service, self-study, and training on the job," Murray says. "Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is the process that provides students and applicants with an opportunity to have their previous learning recognized by Sheridan for credit."

Sheridan staff are available to assist those considering applying to Sheridan, as well as applicants and students, in identifying which pathways may be most suitable for them.

For more about Sheridan College pathways, visit pathways.sheridancollege.ca.

"Say what you know, do what you must, come what may."

› **Sofia Kovalevskaya:** ***Problem-Solving Pioneer***

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AN ACTIVE BODY CAN SHARPEN YOUR MIND

It's February and that new year's resolution to get your body in motion seems to be jogging further away — smothered under the heaps of snow that have gathered outside your dorm window.

But as with all hard workers, being engaged in physical activity can have a direct impact on your well-being.

"Being active helps produce a hormone called endorphins, which gives us a sense of euphoria," says Elaine Chin, MD and chief wellness officer for Telus.

"Getting outside to get more sunlight helps us all feel better."

Chin says that while this time of year can wreak havoc on our physical resolve, it's important to find a way to ignite that fire. She says the simple monitoring of motion can be the first step in effecting change.

"Knowing your numbers can trigger a change in behaviour," she says, pointing to the Fitbit Charge or Samsung Gear Fit as devices that record the wearer's physical activity. "Wearables and health-monitoring apps can help give young people more control and insights to effectively manage their health."

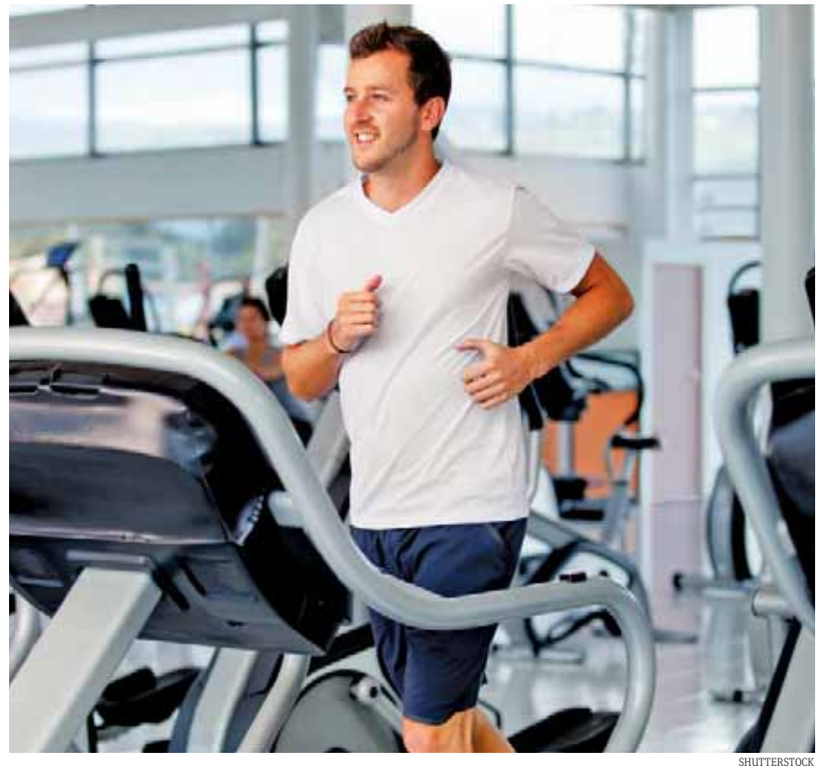
"BEING ACTIVE HELPS PRODUCE A HORMONE CALLED ENDORPHINS, WHICH GIVES US A SENSE OF EUPHORIA. GETTING OUTSIDE TO GET MORE SUNLIGHT HELPS US ALL FEEL BETTER."

– Elaine Chin, MD and chief wellness officer for Telus

Are you still wondering where to begin? Chin suggests that in regard to walking, a healthy amount of steps should be in the range of 8,000 to 10,000 per day.

"Once we know our baseline, we can challenge ourselves to hit or exceed goals per day and, in turn, start to see better results and feel better."

– Elizabeth Beddall



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Helping rebuild lives

At CDI College

Many who pursue a career in social services are inspired by personal experience and hope to provide support for others.

Jessica W. graduated from the CDI College addictions and community services worker program, and was hired as a youth care worker, helping those affected by issues such as drug and family abuse, homelessness, and more.

"I have always wanted to be a part of the community," she says. "CDI College provided me with not only a great education to pursue a career, but helped me grow as a person and find who I was and who I wanted to be."

Becoming an addictions worker is a life-changing career. Not only will you be helping those who are directly affected by these social issues, you will guide and inspire them to rebuild a future for themselves and the people around them.

CDI College provides a more tactile, intimate learning environment for students. With smaller class sizes, students and instructors will have more immediate and direct communication so "when it's time for you to go out in the field, you feel more ready and confident," Jessica says.

To learn more about the CDI College addictions and community services worker program, call 1-877-658-4045 or visit to.cdicollege.ca.

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Maple Leafs goaltender Jonathan Bernier makes a save on John Tavares of the Islanders at the Air Canada Centre, Monday. Tavares got the last laugh, however, scoring in overtime. ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tavares caps Isles' comeback victory

NHL. Mississauga native tallies in overtime to extend his NHL scoring lead

The effort was there for the Toronto Maple Leafs, but the result wasn't what they wanted.

Two days after interim coach Peter Horachek criticized his team for a lack of effort in a blowout loss, the Leafs showed plenty but blew a third-period lead to lose 4-3 in overtime to the New York Islanders on Monday night at Air Canada Centre.

Mississauga native John Tavares went around several defenders to score the overtime winner. With two points, the Islanders' captain extended his NHL lead in the Art Ross Trophy race.

David Booth, Peter Holland and James van Riemsdyk scored for the Leafs (26-35-6), who got 40 saves from goaltender Jonathan Bernier.

Tyler Kennedy, Frans Nielson and Casey Cizakis scored in regulation for the Islanders (43-21-4). Kennedy's goal came in his New York debut.

Islanders goalie Michal Neuvirth stopped 22 shots.

Islanders defenceman Nick Leddy left the game with an injury after colliding with Morgan Rielly in the second period.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It's uncharacteristic and something that's never going to happen again."

Maple Leafs centre Nazem Kadri, a healthy scratch Monday, apologized to his teammates and coaches for being late to a meeting Sunday

Polak awaiting surgery

Maple Leafs defenceman Roman Polak will have season-ending hernia surgery.

- Polak, acquired last offseason from the St. Louis Blues, was a key shutdown player for the Leafs and had five goals and four assists in 56 games.

NFL

Hughes re-signs with Bills

Defensive end Jerry Hughes had no intention of leaving the Bills just when things are beginning to look up in Buffalo.

The chance to play under new coach Rex Ryan, a defensive specialist, and alongside three Pro Bowl linemen were among the key reasons Hughes re-signed with the Bills on Monday. He signed a five-year contract with a potential worth of more than $45 million a day before having the opportunity to test the free-agent market. A person familiar with negotiations provided the player's contract details and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"We have a lot of unfinished business," Hughes said. "And I'm someone who doesn't like to leave anything undone. I wanted to come back with these guys so we could take care of that and get that accomplished." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Police: Johnson unco-operative after shooting

New York Jets running back Chris Johnson was uncooperative with deputies who responded over the weekend to a fatal shooting that left him and a friend with bullet wounds and the driver of their car dead, according to an Orange County Sheriff's Office report released Monday.

Chris Johnson was shot in the right shoulder when someone pulled up next to the Jeep and started firing.

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Paralympics

Huot has stolen medals replaced

Benoit Huot's smile was nearly as bright as the Paralympic medals around his neck.

A little more than six months after the star swimmer had seven medals stolen from his home, he got five back Monday.

The stolen hardware was never recovered, but replacements of Paralympic and Commonwealth Games medals were re-awarded to him at a ceremony at a Montreal high school. Two other medals from Para Pan-Am games have yet to be replaced.

"It's an amazing day for me," said the 31-year-old Huot. "The last six months have been tough, so to have the medals back is something I'm really happy about." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Paralympic swimmer Benoit Huot holds up his five replacement medals during a ceremony Monday in Montreal. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

Bosh on pace be back in September

Chris Bosh was back around the Miami Heat on Monday night.

"Back where I belong," Bosh said.

Chris Bosh speaks Monday in Miami THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bosh was with his team night for the first time in nearly a month, an important and emotional step on his long road back to the NBA after being diagnosed with blood clots on a lung. Bosh could be cleared to start regularly exercising by the end of March, and as of now is scheduled to resume "full basketball activities" in September.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FA Cup

Welbeck returns to burn United

Danny Welbeck scored a tiebreaking goal against his old club in the 61st minute, helping defending Arsenal beat Manchester United 2-1 Monday and advance to the FA Cup semifinals.

Nacho Monreal put the Gunners ahead in the 25th minute, but Wayne Rooney tied the score four minutes later.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Goins goes back to basics in bid to correct swing

Battle for second base.
Texan is drawing from his youth to improve batting as competition heats up for roster spots

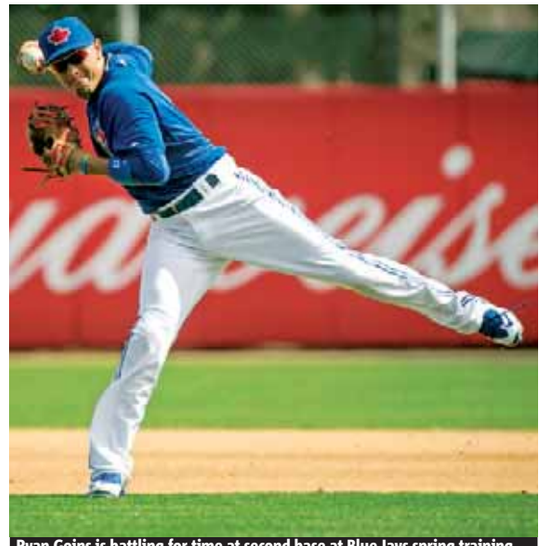
Ryan Goins went home to Round Rock, Texas, this winter, looked up his old friends at a local batting cage, and immediately went to work on his hitting.

Nothing out of the ordinary for the 27-year-old Jays second baseman, except for the frame of mind he brought with him.

"I think I had a lot of (hitting) information that wasn't successful for me last year so I just went back to my hitting from school and the minor leagues, just simplify things a bit," Goins said as a Jays split squad lost 1-0 to Houston on Monday. Toronto's other half fell 6-4 to Detroit in Lakeland, Fla.

Goins entered Jays camp in a five-way dogfight for second base — Ramon Santiago, Steve Tolleson, Munenori Kawasaki and Goins all have designs on either winning the job outright, or earning a roster spot.

Goins won the job out of camp a year ago, but his .188 average ultimately led to a sentence in AAA Buffalo, allowing Kawasaki to play second regularly after May.



Ryan Goins is battling for time at second base at Blue Jays spring training. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

There is more competition this year, with a slight shift in focus. "We have good players in camp and Gibby (manager John Gibbons) has moved (Izturis and Tolleson) around to shortstop and third base, so it's not, 'I'm the starting second baseman,' it's 'What role I fit into,'" bench coach DeMarlo Hale said. The Jays are looking for versatility in part because of shortstop Jose Reyes, whose value in the field — as measured by defensive runs saved, ultimate zone rating and defensive WAR metrics — has declined the past several seasons.

In addition, he remains an above-average hitter, but his offensive stats are also relatively mid-level for a leadoff hitter. Though he is key to the Jays' plans, there is no secret he will be given more off-days and replaced for defensive purposes, depending on situations.

As for the Jays' second baseman, Maicer Izturis, recovered from his season-ending knee surgery in 2014, and appears to be the favourite for the starting job. Izturis wears a brace now when he plays, and requires treatment almost daily to loosen his knee joint before taking to the field. Goins has the best range and glove of any infielder in the organization and, while he has flashed brilliance at second, his true position is short.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Martin catches Stroman

Toronto righty Marcus Stroman yielded two hits, walked two and struck out three in 2-2/3 innings in a 1-0 loss to the Astros.

- Stroman said he's looking forward to developing a relationship with new catcher Russell Martin and viewed their first live outing together as a success.
- "I'm trying to get to learn him as much as possible and he's trying to get to learn me," Stroman said. "It's not an easy process. I throw a pretty good amount of pitches, so getting on the same page is going to take a little bit of time. But today was awesome."

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
With your ruler Mars on great terms with luck planet Jupiter you will make a big impression over the next 24 hours. Don't let your ego get out of hand.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
The answers are easy to find but ask the right questions. Take a look at the world. Who is in charge? Answer that qustion and all else will fall into place.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
The dice are loaded in your favour. All you have to do is throw them with confidence. On the work front especially you need to take a few risks.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
With Mars and Jupiter perfectly aligned today success is a foregone conclusion. No matter how many times you have been rebuffed in the past you will get what you want now.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Set yourself a challenge and go all out to make a success of it. Jupiter in your sign, although moving retrograde, makes this the kind of day when limits do not exist, at least not for you.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may be logical but try not to be too rational in your thinking today because it will limit you. If you want something enough you will find a way to get it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Make an effort to talk to loved ones and find out what they think. Cosmic activity in your opposite signs of Aries means that if you are nice to people they will be nice to you.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If you focus on a problem to the exclusion of everything else you'll find the solution you need. The answers you require are in your mind already.

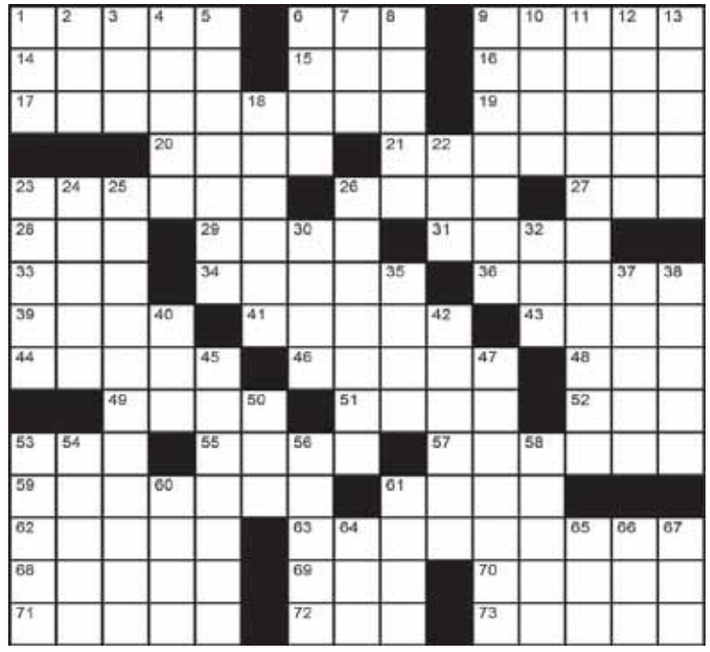
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Cosmic activity in your fellow Fire signs of Aries and Leo means everything comes easy to you at the moment. But that does not mean you no longer have to make an effort.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Follow your intuition over the next 24 hours, even if it leads you in a strange new direction. Just because a lot of people are moving down one path does not mean it is the right path.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Do something today that takes others by surprise. It should remind those you live, work and do business with that you shouldn't be taken for granted.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Do you have what it takes to succeed? Yes! You may be a Pisces, one of the nicest signs in the zodiac, but that doesn't mean you can't be ambitious!

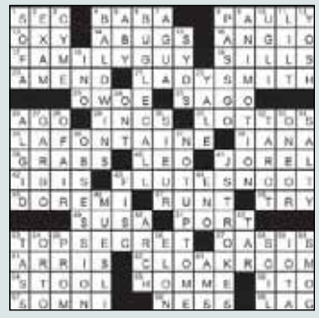
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Moon shape, e.g.
6. Since-ancient-times dog
9. Beeping communicator
14. Nouveau __ (New-wealth set)
15. Jackie O's hubby
16. Feminine inner self, in Jungian psychology
17. Canadian frozen yogurt chain founded in 1986: 2 wds.
19. Pancake-on-pancake-on...
20. Bail
21. Daytime movie
23. Backup the file again
26. 1991 Extreme hit: "__ Hearted"
27. Mr. Shackelford
28. Li'l elevation
29. American univ.
31. Spill the beans
33. 'Law' suffix
34. Commandment word
36. Followers
39. __ upswing: 2 wds.
41. Canadian mixed martial artist, __ 'The Spartan' Theodorou
43. Bargain
44. Ancient water nymph
46. 'A.' of President James A. Garfield
48. Dick Dyke link
49. Actor Will
51. Edmonton sch.: letter + wd. + letter
52. Time-saving abbr.
53. "Great catch!"
55. Borscht ingredient
57. Loved one
59. Activity signer-upper
61. Fan's favourite
62. Decorative edging in embroidery
63. Sandra L. __, Master of the Royal Canadian Mint
68. Piano exercise
69. Stop
70. __ Robina, Parenting Expert on "Cityline"
71. Earlies opposites, say
72. Place
73. Flower kind

Down
1. Discharge droplets
2. Brazilian city
3. Hosp. recording
4. Solomon to __ (W.B. Yeats poem)
5. Calgary-headquartered oil sands company
6. Go separate ways
7. Montevideo is its cap.
8. Gadget
9. Pinks and peaches and lilacs
10. Against
11. Ice Age rodent in North America: 2 wds.
12. Master of ceremonies
13. Made money, with In
18. Arrow: French
22. Greece neighbour [abbr.]
23. Silk-like fabric
24. Female werewolf on Space's "Bitten"
25. Like some McCain fries: 2 wds.
26. North Pacific flatfish
30. __ __ Land (Los Angeles, colloquially)
32. Knowing interjections
35. Tropical tuber
37. Make happy
38. Coinage in Coventry
40. Glaswegian's 'No'
42. Terell __, "Turn the Leaf" (Prod. Preme Diesel) recording artist from Vancouver
45. Weighs the pros and cons
47. "Vogue" songstress
50. Stimpy's co-star
53. Drive bugs away
54. The Body Shop founder Ms. Roddick
56. Singing: Ms. Merman
58. Gymnastics: Ms. Korbut's
60. Emulated an equestrian
61. '500' car race
64. "__ Maria in Novela Land" (2015)
65. Blaster!
66. Roman I's amount
67. Big Apple hockey team [acronym]

Yesterday's Crossword

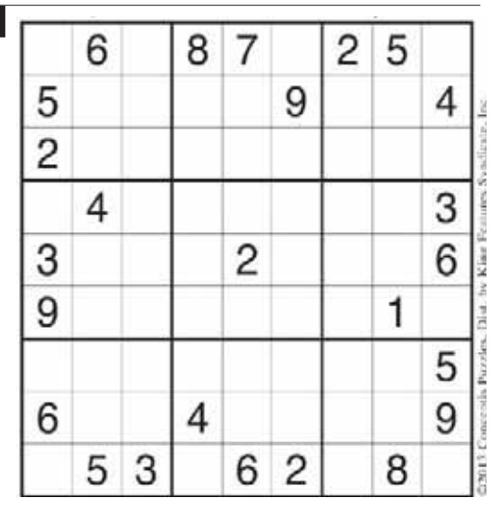


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

6	2	9	5	7	3	8	4	1
4	3	8	2	1	6	7	9	5
1	5	7	8	4	9	6	2	3
7	4	6	9	2	5	1	3	8
8	9	3	1	6	7	4	5	2
5	1	2	3	8	4	9	7	6
3	8	4	6	9	2	5	1	7
2	7	1	4	5	8	3	6	9
9	6	5	7	3	1	2	8	4

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